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By- Guggenheim, Fred

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Descriptors- \*ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, \*ACADEMIC ASPIRATION, ACHIEVEMENT TESTS, \*CAUCASIAN STUDENTS, COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS, CURRICULUM, EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, GRADE 6, GUIDANCE PROGRAMS, HUMAN RELATIONS UNITS, NEGATIVE ATTITUDES, \*NEGRO STUDENTS, PREDICTION, PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS, SELF CONCEPT, \*SELF ESTEEM, SPANISH SPEAKING, STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Identifiers- Draw a Person Test, New York City, Semantic Differential Scales

The relationship between self-esteem, academic expectations, and ethnic group membership was studied in a New York City elementary school which had an approximately equal enrollment of Negro, white, and Spanish-background pupils. Subjects were 162 sixth-grade students who were tested with two projective tests and one specifically designed achievement test. Self-esteem was measured by the projective tests, and expectation level was determined by the pupils' pre-exposure predications of their correct responses to the three administrations of the achievement test. Results show that there was no racial difference in self-esteem but that Negroes had more negative attitudes toward school. Although both white and Negro children approached the academic task with equally high aspirations, the Negro level dropped after experiencing failure. The gap between aspirations and achievement was significantly greater for Negro than for white children. Implications for school programs include creating a positive image of Negroes among white children, for image-building may not accomplish very much for Negroes. Human relations courses for teachers should be research-based and should pinpoint the sources of Negroes' negative attitudes. Curriculums should provide successful academic experiences, and guidance programs should clarify the relationship between means and goals. (NH)

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**SELF-ESTEEM AND ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATION****FOR WHITE AND NEGRO CHILDREN**

Prepared by

NPS  
Fred Guggenheim  
School Research Associate

- - - -

NPS  
David A. Abramson  
Assistant Director

William H. Bristow  
Assistant Superintendent

Helene Lloyd  
Acting Deputy Superintendent

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## A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATION FOR WHITE AND NEGRO CHILDREN

One of the few valid generalizations that one can make in the field of education is to state that in some way the raising of self-esteem is a major objective of all school programs for disadvantaged Negro children.

Within the last few years there has been a proliferation of programs in the schools designed to help these children. One might say that the "New Look" in American education centers around programs for the disadvantaged. Either covertly or overtly all of the existing programs for disadvantaged Negro children aim at building feelings of self-esteem.

Although self-esteem is a fundamental construct used in describing the objectives of the majority of these programs few of them have any clear definition of what they mean by self-esteem. Usually, the terms self-esteem and self-concept are used interchangeably although they are different classes of constructs.

For this discussion we shall use the generalized definition that a person's self-concept is a composite of thoughts and feelings about his individual existence. It constitutes who he is and what he is: it is an image or picture that the individual holds of himself. (5). As such, it includes physical and psychological self-images. Although a person may have separate images of himself, as for example his image of himself as an athlete, or as a scholar, or as a hunter, there is a degree of continuity of memories and experiences which bind the self and maintains self identity. This over-riding concept - this gestalt of self - is reflected in the degree to which a person regards himself as an object of importance and worth.

In this project we were concerned with the evaluative dimension of self-concept. By this we mean self-satisfaction, self-acceptance, self-worth and self-esteem.

Self-esteem is developed in many ways, both simple and complex, but perhaps the most crucial way is through interpersonal relations with significant others in a social-cultural setting (14). Children add to their self-esteem, either positively or negatively, values that their cultural milieu regard as important. Even before

children come to school they learn that there are different ways people live and that these differences are used as a basis for classifying people. Using these clues for identifying people a child begins to identify himself with particular groups and includes this identification in his concept of self (4). Children also discover quite early that there are social stereotypes. As they come in contact with the public media of communication they learn to associate prestige with members of the dominant group because most of the public communication media are dominant group oriented (13). These identifications become the basis for evaluations of the self.

Simmel, early in this century pointed out that a human person can only be defined in terms of his social group and his role, status, function, etc. in that group (18). Mead, later developed the concept of the "the self" as the "good me," the "bad me," and the "not me" (10). According to Sullivan, personifications of self develop early in life, first with the mothering one, and later on through relationships with others (16).

One of the functions of self-esteem is the setting of levels of aspiration. In this sense a corollary goal of programs for disadvantaged children is the raising of their aspiration levels. However, the goal is not simply raising aspiration level, but raising it in such a way so that it does not exceed the boundaries of reality. In order to do this, individuals must have a certain level of awareness of their abilities and limitations. It is generally assumed that because of prejudice, negative stereotypes, social denigration, and generally lower class membership, Negro children have less opportunities to develop feelings of worth and dignity. As a result of these pervasive negative experiences it is hypothesized that their aspirations for achievement tend to be unrelated to their ability.

An aspect of high self-esteem is that it should enable an individual to more adequately maintain a homeostatic relationship with this environment. Rainy, refers to the self-concept as a map which is referred to by each person in order to understand himself in moments of crises or choice. (20)

Since every human being is in constant interaction with the world about him,

he is in a state of continuous adaptation. This adaptation involves manipulation of either the self, the environment, or both. Experiences with and in the world structure perceptions. Perceptions based on these experiences are used as data for decisions upon which future behavior is based. Decisions related to perceptions that reflect the real (objective) world are significant aspects of a high level of self-esteem. They are indicative of an optimum level of functioning in given situations. It should be noted that the definition of self-esteem is here anchored to external reality (External reality meaning the reality agreed upon by the majority of "others"). Unless we introduce a reality dimension to our definition, the phenomenological high self-regard of the paranoid and the high self-regard of the creative scientist become equivalent, and consequently, meaningless.

One test of the reality dimension of self-esteem is the capacity to assess one's own abilities in terms of the requirements of various kinds of situations. In this sense also level of aspiration can be seen to be operationally related to self-esteem. An individual with high self-esteem would have a high level of aspiration, but, one which still remains congruent with reality factors. These reality factors would include the parameters of the situation and an objective appraisal of the self in relation to these parameters. An individual with low self-esteem would have a level of aspiration that would tend to be incongruent with reality, that is, it would tend to be either too high or too low in terms of the actual requirements of the situation or his own abilities.

The questions under consideration in this proposal concern the relationship between self-esteem, academic expectations, and ethnic group membership. Specifically:

- a) Do children with high self-esteem have levels of achievement expectations which are more congruent with their actual performance than children with low self-esteem?
- b) Do children with high self-esteem exhibit more adaptable behavior than children with low self-esteem in terms of being able to alter their levels of achievement expectation on the basis of experience.
- c) Are there differences between Negro and white pupils in self-esteem?

d) Are there differences between Negro and white pupils in the discrepancy between their achievement expectation and their ability?

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. White pupils have levels of aspirations in academic tasks that are closer to their actual abilities in those tasks than Negro pupils.
2. High self-esteem pupils have levels of aspirations in academic tasks that are closer to their actual abilities in those tasks than low self-esteem pupils.
3. High self-esteem pupils have more flexibility in adjusting their level of aspiration as a result of experience than low self-esteem pupils.
4. Negro pupils have lower self-esteem than white pupils.

### Related Literature

One of the earliest studies on the relationship between level of aspiration and self-concept was done by Pauline Sears in 1941 (15). She found an association between her subjects self-ideal self-discrepancy scores and their levels of aspiration on an experimentally created task.

In another study Martire, found no relationship between realistic or wishful level of aspiration scores and self-ideal discrepancy scores (9). He did find that high achievement subjects showed high self-ideal self-discrepancies in both neutral and achievement-related situations.

Using a Q-short technique Lepin and Chorkoff found no significant correlations between self-regard and goal-discrepancy scores obtained from a code deciphering task(7).

Bills attempted to correlate five varied level of aspiration tasks with a self-acceptance test and with discrepancy scores from the Index of Adjustment and Values (1). He found two out of the ten possible correlations to be significant..

Part of the inconsistency of these four studies is due to the investigators use of different instruments to measure level of aspiration and self-concept. Although self-acceptance and self-ideal self-discrepancy are somewhat related

measures of self-concept, they are far from congruent. It is possible to have a low self-ideal-self-discrepancy by being at either end of the range of self-idea self-continuum.

Another source contributing to the research inconsistency is the disparity between the generalized self-concept scales used and the usual specificity of the level of aspiration scales used. It seems unreasonable to expect a correspondence between global self-concept, particularly as it is generally defined, and aspirations in a laboratory task of estimating success in target shooting.

Cowen, Heiliyer and Axelrod, in a study of the influence of self-concept on learning, found that subjects who had large self-ideal-self-discrepancies had significantly greater difficulty in learning nonsense syllables which were paired with conflictual adjective pairs (3). They used nonsense syllables which were paired with Bills' adjectives.

Cartwright was interested in testing Rogers' hypothesis that experiences, which are inconsistent with the self-concept, would be ignored or distorted (2). He found that maladjusted subjects showed significantly less recall of adjectives which they had previously described as not being like themselves, than well adjusted subjects.

In studying some of the formative influences on self-concept, Huntington found that medical students' self images varied with their awareness of the expectations of others (6). They found that medical students saw themselves as physicians when they dealt with patients, but as students when they dealt with physicians.

#### METHOD

##### Sample

The sample selected for testing the hypotheses was drawn from one elementary school in Manhattan. The student body of this school was made up of approximately equal proportions of Negro, white and Puerto Rican and Latin American background pupils. The school is located in a changing neighborhood although one that is changing at a comparatively slow rate. Many of the Negro children are bussed to

the school. The classes in the school are organized homogeneously by reading. All of the classes are integrated but the proportion of ethnic group representation per class varies. One hundred and sixty two children in seven classes were tested for self-esteem. From these a sample of Negro and white, high and low self-esteem children were selected. The final sample consisted of the following distribution of pupils:

|                  | Negro | White |
|------------------|-------|-------|
| High Self-esteem | 17    | 15    |
| Low Self-esteem  | 12    | 12    |

The equivalence of the groups in self-esteem was tested by means of the analysis of variance. A summary of the analyses can be found in appendix A.

When comparisons were made among Negro, white, and Puerto Rican pupils, the entire sixth grade student body was used. However, Puerto Rican pupils who were designated as non-English speaking were excluded from the analysis. Included, however, were pupils with backgrounds from other Latin American countries.

### Tests

In order to collect data for the study both published and specially designed instruments were used. They included the Draw a Person Test, a set of 10 Semantic Differential scales and a specifically designed achievement test.

Inferences about an individual's self-esteem can be made from responses to semi-structured projective tests. The notion of projection has been widely used in both applied and basic personality research. The idea behind projection, that a person's values, attitudes, needs, wishes, and motives can be projected outside of himself on to external objects or events offers a means for investigating such constructs as self-esteem.

As cross-cultural instruments for studying personality, the Draw a Person test and the Semantic Differential are particularly promising. Drawing activities of various kinds are found in all cultures. They are relatively free of training effects, language usage, and ability. The thinking in terms of opposites, as required by the Semantic Differential, is a natural human phenomena and there is general agreement among ethnologists that semantic opposition is a common element of

most language systems.

The Semantic Differential is a device invented by Osgood, et al, for quantifying subjective testing procedures (11). It provides a quantitative method for recording projective test data by using a combination of controlled ideational association and test scaling procedures. A subject is provided with a concept (in this study, word concepts and a drawing) which he must describe according to a series of bipolar adjectival scales. Usually, each scale consists of 7 steps, although more or less may be used.

In a series of cross-cultural factor analysis studies using series of bipolar adjectives three factors or dimensions of meanings, the first of which is relevant to this study, appeared to be dominant and appeared roughly in the same order - evaluation, potency, and activity (17).

Osgood, et. al, found that the Semantic Differential offers several advantages over commonly used projective tests. With the Semantic Differential the personality, intuitions, and biases of the investigator are removed from the scoring process, the possibility of group administration is enhanced, and most important, it provides a procedure for quantifying subjective data.

The Semantic Differential scales used in this study consisted of seven steps using bipolar adjectives that progress from a neutral, and therefore meaningless origin, in two directions. Each direction was defined by the linguistic qualifiers very, some and little. The left to right ordering of positive and negative scales was randomized to eliminate the possibility of directional set. The scales used in this study are reproduced and presented in Appendix B.

The Draw a Person Test is a projective testing technique that provides a minimally threatening procedure for obtaining a glimpse of an individual's inner world. It is basically a non-verbal technique that permits persons to express themselves ....as they are, as they fear they might become or as they would like to be" (9,p.3). According to Machover, "The body or self, is the most intimate point of reference in any activity. ...the perception of the body image as it has developed out of a person's experience, must somehow guide the individual who is drawing

in the specific structure and content, which constitutes his offering of a 'person'." Because of the great freedom of expression that this procedure provides when administered in its customary form it also permits the possibility of significant others to be projected instead of the self. To avoid this possibility, the instructions given in this study were to "Draw a person like yourself." After the pupils had completed their drawing they were given the ten evaluative semantic differential scales and asked to judge the person they drew. (Before this session the pupils had been given a training session in how to use the semantic differential.) The semantic differential scores, rather than the drawings themselves, were then used to select high and low self-esteem pupils from each ethnic group.

A twenty item non-verbal achievement test was constructed to provide a base for establishing discrepancies with pupil expectations. The items are similar to those used on most non-verbal paper and pencil intelligence tests. The test and items were developed and analyzed on a comparable fifth and sixth grade pupil population. The test is reproduced and presented in Appendix C. The reliability of the test, established by an analysis of variance procedure was .79.

#### Procedure

Pupils were given three consecutive days of achievement - expectation (level of aspiration) testing. They were given the achievement test on the first day, although they expected to receive an achievement test on each day of the experiment. On the second and third day they were given a rationalized explanation, after they made their expectation estimate, of why they did not get the actual test.

The test situations progressed from requiring students to estimate how many correct items they would get based on no experience to estimating how many they would get correct in each of the succeeding test situation after being provided with increasing amounts of information. The three testing situations were ordered as follows:

- 1) Pupils were told they were going to take an achievement test consisting of 20 items. They were asked to estimate the number they expected to get right. (First day)

2) Pupils were told they were getting a second achievement test almost identical to the first test. They were asked to estimate the number they expected to get right. (Second day)

3) Pupils were told they were getting the second achievement test which was almost identical to the first test. (Third day).

Before they were asked to make their third estimates as to how many they expected to get right they were told their actual scores on the first test.

The achievement test score was used as a base to establish discrepancy scores for the three situations.

In this study, expectancy is considered to mean level of aspiration.

Although only a pre-selected number of children were used to test the hypotheses of the experiment, all of the sixth grade children were administered the tests. These included Negro, white and Puerto Rican children.

In addition to using the Semantic Differential scales to judge their drawings, the children also used this set of scales to judge the concept "School." It was expected to use this school attitude data for cross-validating the self-esteem data.

## RESULTS

The findings of the analysis of variance, as presented in Table 1, failed to support the hypothesis of a difference between high and low self-esteem children in the congruence between their actual achievement and their expectations of achievement (discrepancy scores). The results did indicate a significant difference in discrepancy scores between ethnic groups ( $p < .01$ ). Negro pupils had significantly greater discrepancies between their actual achievement and their expectations for achievement. There was also a significant difference ( $p < .01$ ) found between trials.. As pupils gained more information on succeeding trials the discrepancy between their achievement and expectations diminished.

Since the results in Table 1 are for absolute discrepancy scores which disregard the direction of the discrepancy, further analyses were made. The discrepancy scores were tallied according to their direction and the amount of the discrepancy

TABLE 1

Summary of Analysis of Variance for  
 Negro and White Pupils on Discrepancy Scores  
 Between Achievement and Expectation

| Source of Variation           | df  | MS     | F        |
|-------------------------------|-----|--------|----------|
| <u>Between subjects</u>       |     |        |          |
| Ethnic groups (A)             | 1   | 318.03 | 12.44 ** |
| Self-concept levels (B)       | 1   | 10.71  | .42      |
| A X B                         | 1   | 3.29   | .13      |
| <u>Subjects within groups</u> | 52  | 25.56  |          |
| <u>Within subjects</u>        |     |        |          |
| Trials (C)                    | 2   | 30.96  | 9.56 **  |
| A X C                         | 2   | 8.24   | 2.54     |
| B X C                         | 2   | 11.33  | 3.50 *   |
| A X B X C                     | 2   | 5.67   | 1.75     |
| C X subjects within groups    | 114 | 3.24   |          |

\* p .05

\*\* p .01

was ignored. Estimates which were higher than achievement were assigned plus values. Estimates which were lower than achievement were assigned minus values. Estimates which coincided with achievement were assigned zero values. Chi square analyses were computed for plus values between ethnic groups and between self-esteem groups. A significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 17.29$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was found between Negro and white pupils in the proportion of expectations which were higher than achievements. Eighty six percent of the Negro pupils as compared to 58% of the white pupils over-estimated how many problems they thought they would get right.

A significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 7.23$ ,  $p .05$ ) was also obtained between high and low self-esteem groups in the proportion of expectations which were higher than achievements. High self-esteem pupils had consistently higher over-estimates than low self-esteem pupils.

A significant interaction ( $p < .05$ ) between self-esteem and trials indicated that on the first test trial (no information) there were no differences in the discrepancy scores between high and low self-esteem pupils but as more information became available low self-esteem children's discrepancy scores became smaller than those of high self-esteem children (Figure 1). Although, this interaction supports the hypotheses, the results are in the reversed direction. Further analysis of the direction of the discrepancies were made. High self-esteem children's estimates were 63% higher than their obtained scores as compared to 37% for low self-esteem children on the first trial. For all trials combined, 60% of high self-esteem children over-estimated their scores as compared to 50% for low self-esteem pupils.

An analysis of variance, as presented in Table 2, of achievement scores indicated a significant difference ( $.01$ ) between Negro and white pupils. White pupils scored a mean of 14.70 and Negro pupils scored a mean of 10.72.

FIGURE 1

Interaction of Trials and Levels of Self-esteem on Discrepancy Scores

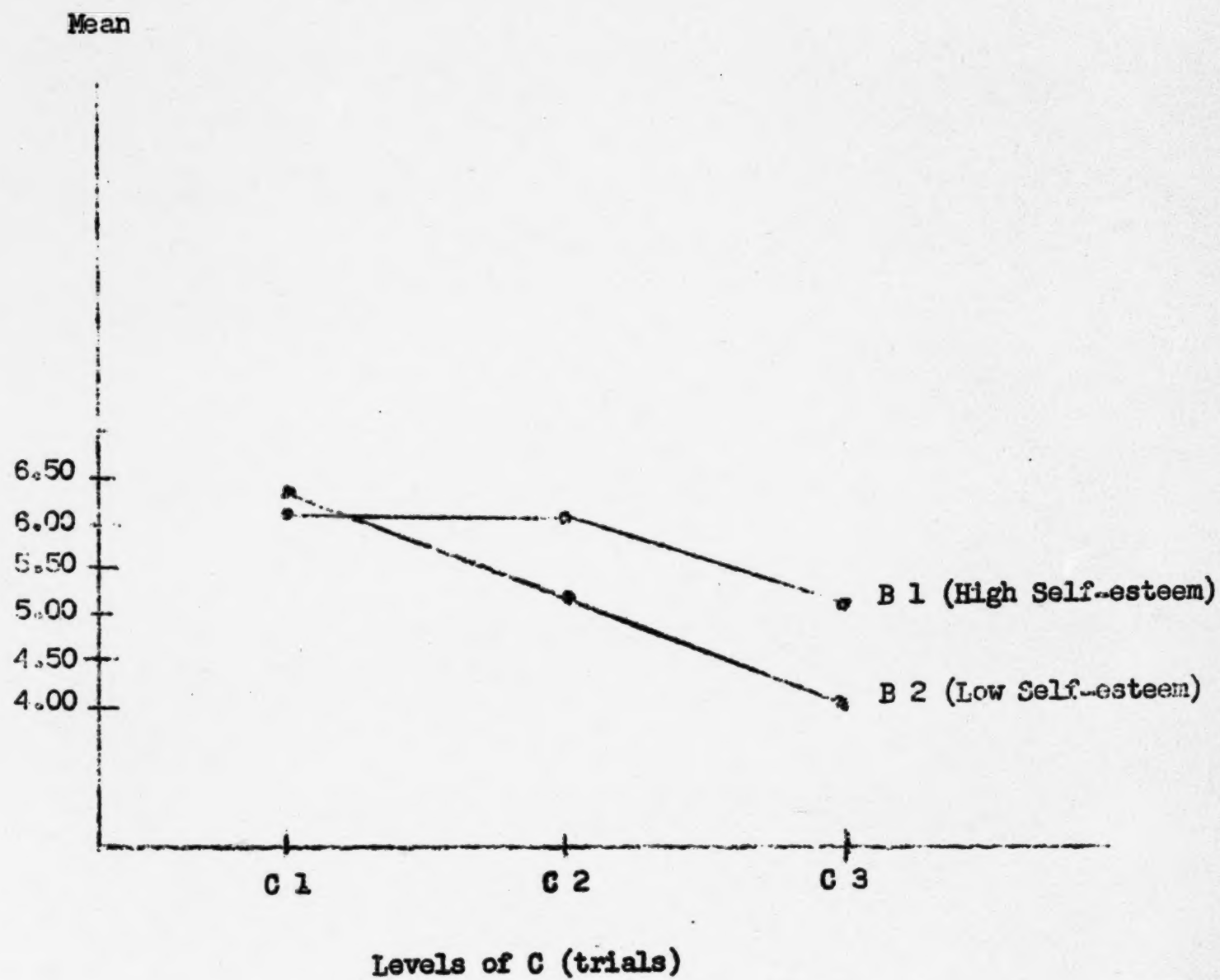


TABLE 2

Summary of Analysis of Variance for  
Negro and White Pupils on Achievement Test

| Source of Variation            | df | MS     | F        |
|--------------------------------|----|--------|----------|
| Between ethnic groups (A)      | 1  | 4.18   | 14.44 ** |
| Between self-esteem levels (b) | 1  | 221.44 | .27      |
| A X B                          | 1  | .13    | .01      |
| Within                         | 52 | 15.33  |          |

\*\* p  $\leq$  .01

Pupil raw expectancy scores in the three test situations were analyzed. These results are summarized in Table 3. A significant interaction ( $p \leq .01$ ) was found between ethnic groups and levels of self-esteem on expectancy scores. This interaction is diagramed in Figure 2. It indicates that low self-esteem white pupils had higher expectations for achievement than low self-esteem Negro pupils, but there was no difference between high self-esteem Negro and white pupils. There was also a significant interaction between ethnic group, level of self-esteem and test situation on expectancy scores. White pupils of low self-esteem had lower expectations than white pupils with high self-esteem in the first test situation, but had higher expectations in the subsequent test situations. In general, the white pupils started with a relatively low expectation on the first trial, jumped to a high expectation level on the second trial, and to an in-between level of expectation on the third trial. The expectations of Negro pupils became increasingly lower from trial to trial. In the first and third trial low self-esteem Negro pupils had higher expectations than high self-esteem Negro pupils. (Figure 3)

As mentioned in the preceding section the entire sixth grade population was tested. This population included Puerto Rican, Negro and white pupils in close to equal numbers. An analysis of variance was made on the self-esteem scores of the three groups. A summary of this analysis is presented in Table 4. A significant difference ( $p \leq .05$ ) was found between the three groups. Separate  $t$  tests were applied to pairs of means. A significant difference was obtained between Negro and Puerto Rican ( $p \leq .01$ ) pupils and between white and Puerto Rican pupils ( $p \leq .01$ ). No difference was found between Negro and white pupils. The Puerto Rican pupils had the lowest average (Mean 25.62\*) self-esteem as compared to white (Mean 20.78) and Negro (Mean 21.34) pupils.

The school attitude data for the entire sixth grade population is summarized in Table 5. The analysis of variance indicated a significant difference ( $p \leq .05$ ) among the three ethnic groups in school attitude. A significant difference ( $p \leq .05$ ) was obtained between Negro and white pupils and Negro and Puerto Rican pupils. The

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\* The higher scores on the Semantic Differential scales, indicates lower evaluations.

TABLE 3  
Summary of Analysis of Variance for  
Negro and White Pupils on Expected  
Test Scores

| Source of Variation        | df  | MS     | F        |
|----------------------------|-----|--------|----------|
| Between subjects           |     |        |          |
| Ethnic groups (A)          | 1   | 8.61   | .78      |
| Self-concept levels (B)    | 1   | .02    | .00      |
| A X B                      | 1   | 874.06 | 78.82 ** |
| Subjects within groups     | 52  | 11.09  |          |
| Within subjects            |     |        |          |
| Trials (C)                 | 2   | 7.87   | .59      |
| A X C                      | 2   | 12.61  | .94      |
| B X C                      | 2   | 1.26   | .09      |
| A X B X C                  | 2   | 434.62 | 32.41 ** |
| C X subjects within groups | 114 | 13.41  |          |

\*\* p < .01

FIGURE 2

Interaction between Ethnic Group and Self-esteem on Expectation

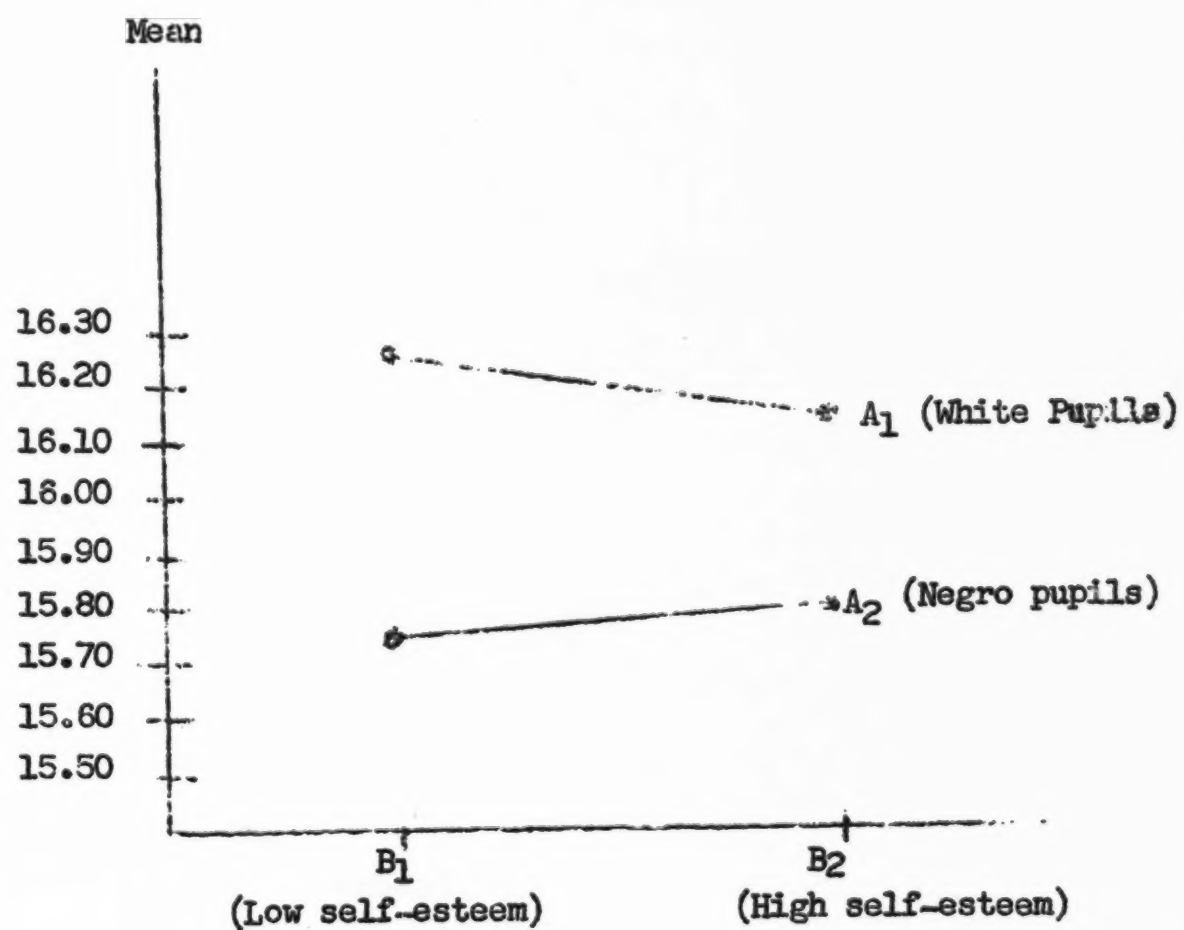


FIGURE 3

Interaction Between Ethnic Group, Level of Self-esteem and Test Trials on Expectation

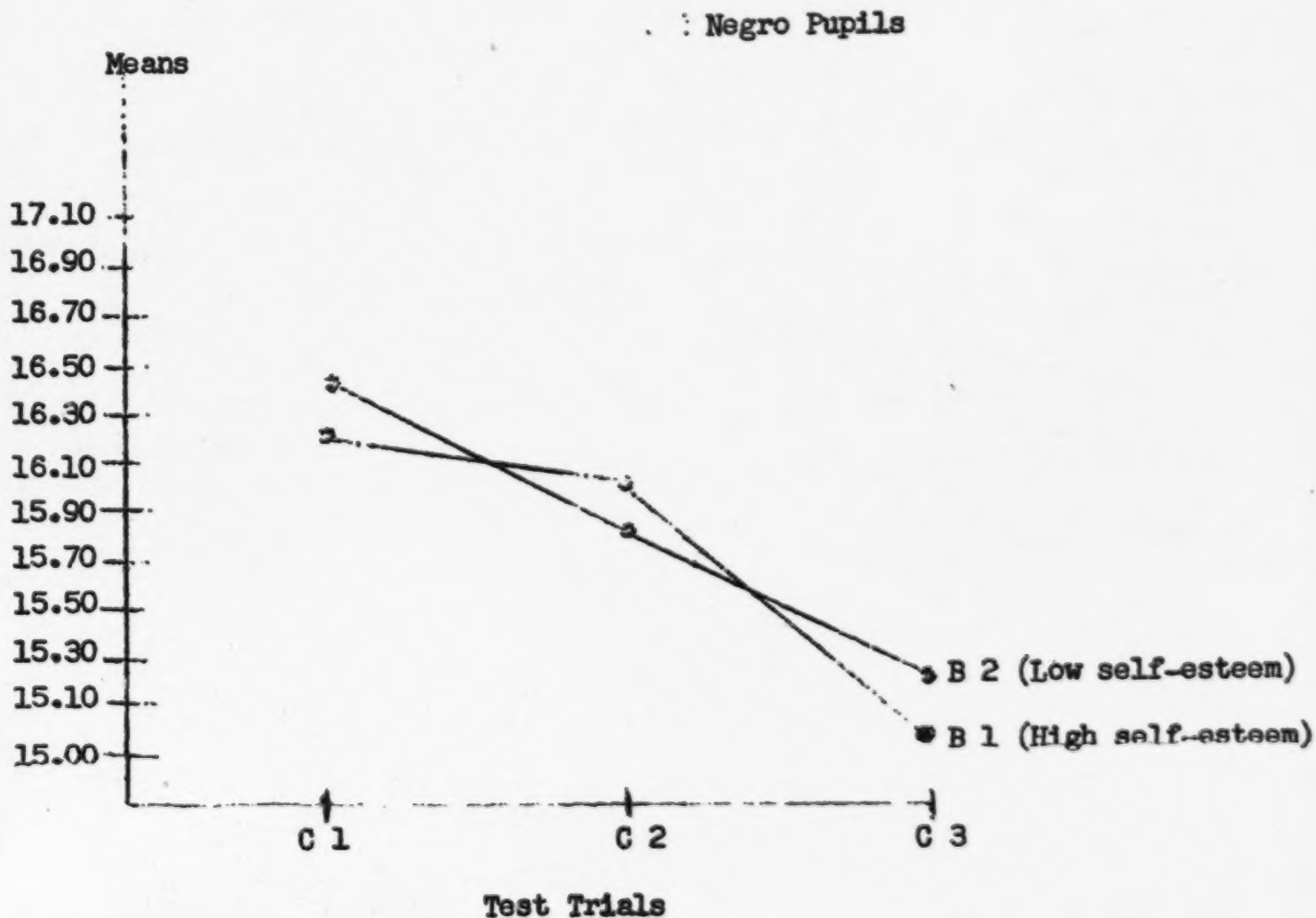
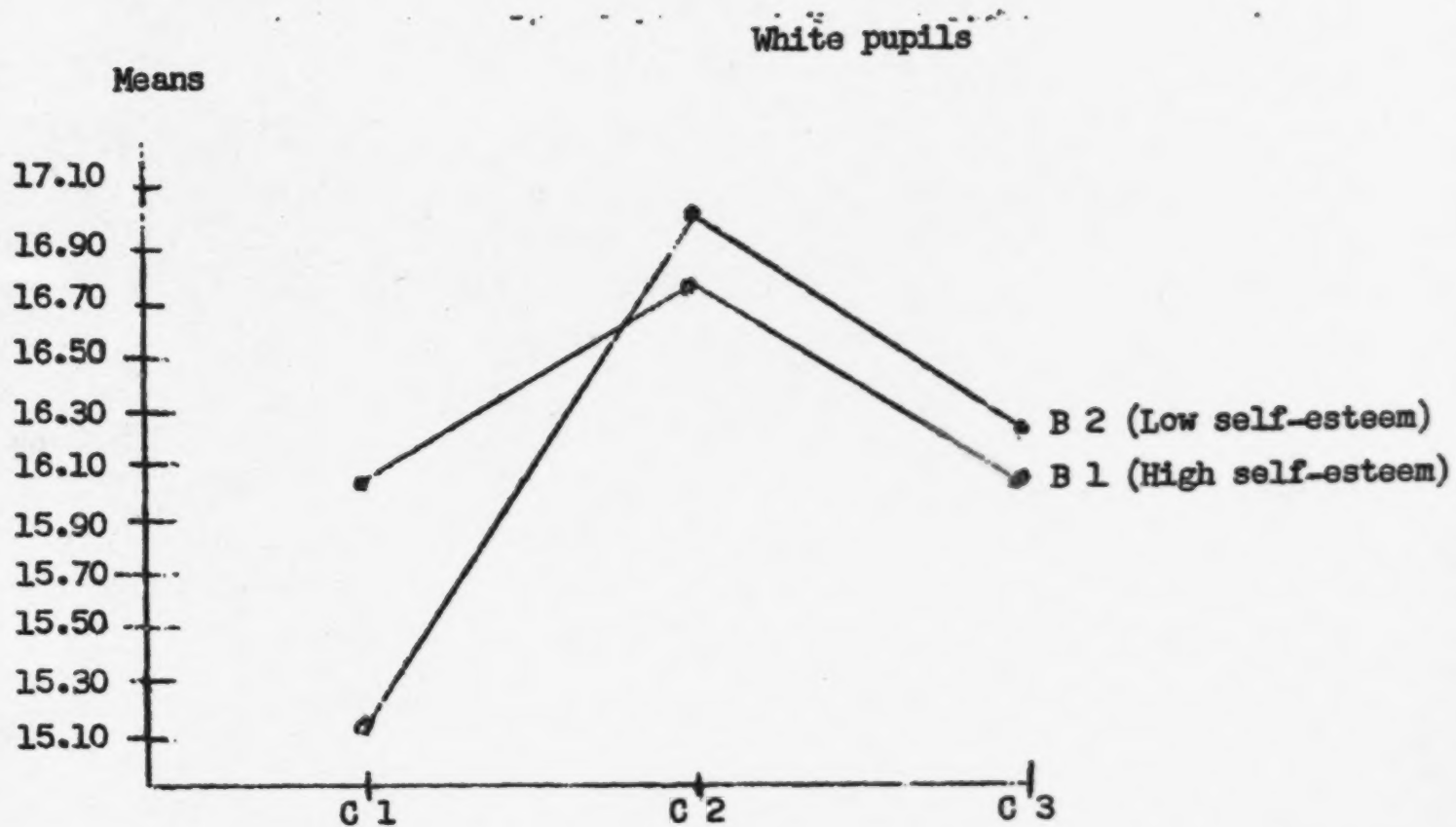


TABLE 4

Summary of Analysis of Variance for  
Negro, White, and Puerto Rican Pupils  
on Self-esteem (Total 6th grade population)

| Source of Variation | df  | MS     | F      |
|---------------------|-----|--------|--------|
| Between groups      | 2   | 205.05 | 3.61 * |
| Within              | 133 | 56.86  |        |

\*  $p \leq .05$

t tests

Negro - White .76

Negro - Puerto Rican 5.42

White - Puerto Rican 5.69

Means \*\*

Negro 21.34

White 20.78

Puerto Rican 25.62

\*\* Higher scores indicate lower attitude

TABLE 5

Summary of Analysis of Variance for  
Negro, White, and Puerto Rican Pupils  
on Self-esteem (Total 6th grade population)

| Source of Variation | df  | MS     | F     |
|---------------------|-----|--------|-------|
| Between groups      | 2   | 213.38 | 3.57* |
| Within              | 133 | 59.84  |       |

\*  $p \leq .05$

| <u>t test</u>        |      | <u>Means</u> |
|----------------------|------|--------------|
| Negro - White        | 3.62 | 26.55 N.     |
| Negro - Puerto Rican | 5.30 | 23.80 W.     |
| White - Puerto Rican | 1.76 | 22.25 P. R.  |

Negro pupils (Mean 23.80) had more negative school attitudes than white (Mean 23-80) and Puerto Rican (Mean 22.25) pupils.

The relationship between self-esteem and school attitude for the three ethnic groups is presented in Figure 4. The plot illustrated in Figure 4 indicates an inverse relationship between self-esteem and school attitude for the three ethnic groups. The Negro group tends to have a high level of self-esteem and a low level of school attitude in comparison to Puerto Rican pupils who have a low level of self-esteem and a high level of school attitude. For both Negro and white pupils self-esteem is higher than attitude towards school, whereas, for Puerto Rican pupils their attitude towards school is more favorable than their attitude towards self.

#### CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the analyses the following conclusions were reached:

Hypothesis one was accepted. Hypothesis two, three and four were rejected. White pupils had levels of aspirations that were closer to their actual abilities in those tasks, than Negro pupils. No differences were found between high and low self-esteem pupils in the discrepancy between performance and ability. Experience in a task did not affect the discrepancy scores of high and low self-esteem pupils. There also appeared to be no difference in the self-esteem of Negro and white pupils.

Because of the type of school used, the generalizability of the results of this study are limited to sixth grade Negro and white pupils attending integrated classes. Replication of this study is needed in predominantly white and Negro populated school.

#### DISCUSSION

Although several of the hypotheses in this study were not supported by the data, the results do have important implications for the methods and concepts generally employed in studying self-concept and self-esteem.

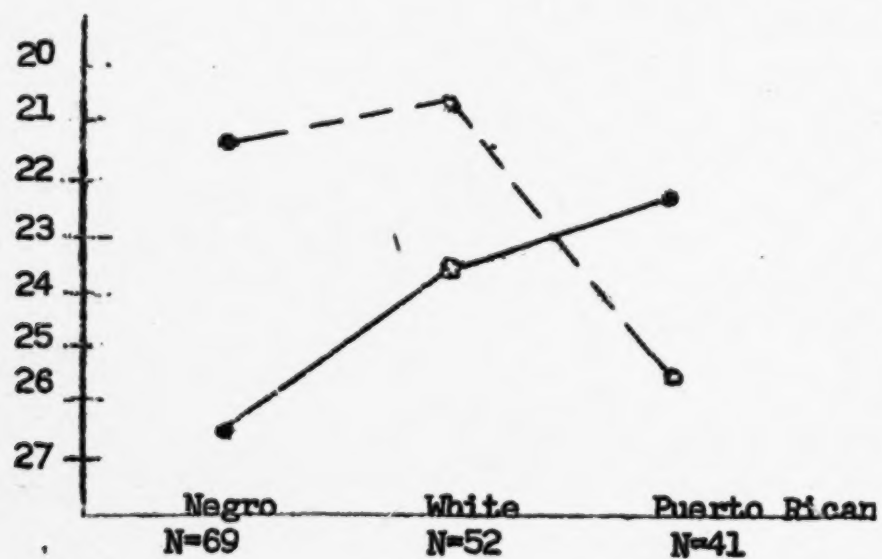
The validity of phenomenal measures for predicting self-esteem behavior is seriously open to question. Problems of social desirability and defensive

FIGURE 4

Distribution of Means for Negro, White,  
and Puerto Rican Pupils on Self-esteem and  
School Attitude (Total 6th grade population)

--- Self-esteem  
— School

Ethnic Group Means



responses which loom large when measuring self-esteem do not seem to be adequately controlled in the phenomenological framework. While the technique used in the study to measure self-esteem was relatively indirect, it is not certain as to whether or not several of the measured low self-esteem children were not making defensive responses or compensatory responses. The differences between Puerto Rican pupils and Negro and white pupils in their discrepancy scores tends to lend some support to the validity of the measure employed for test unsophisticated subjects (Puerto Rican pupils). Of the three groups, the Puerto Rican pupils had the lowest self-esteem but the most positive school attitude (figure 4). On the other hand, Negro pupils had about the same level of self-esteem as white pupils, but the most negative school attitude among the three groups.

These results make sense in a psychodynamic framework and the following interpretation is offered as a basis for further study.

The maintenance of integrity, identity, and worth are basic human needs. Negroes live in a culture and environment which constantly attacks their sense of integrity and worth. The American culture, which is predominantly white, has developed mores and folkways, both overt and covert, that constantly emphasize the inferiority of the Negro. This belief system has in many ways brought about a self-fulfilling prophecy. Many Negroes do hold inferior jobs, have poorer housing, and have several other negative characteristics. That these characteristics are symptomatic, is irrelevant for the growing Negro child. He must either accept them as true characteristics of himself and his group or in some way defend against their insidious effects. It is proposed that many Negro children have maintained their personal integrity and self-esteem\* by rejecting some facets of white culture with which they are in contact. This seems to be supported by the negative attitude towards school found among Negro children in this study. Puerto Rican children, on the other hand, whose experience with mainland American culture is only recent, tend to interpret their school failures or difficulties in adjusting

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\* The civil rights movement is probably most responsible for the change in Negroes' relationship with himself and American society.

as their own inadequacies. To them, the school still represents a positive force; perhaps one that can help them overcome their own inadequacies. Both Negro and Puerto Rican pupils obtained significantly lower scores than white pupils on the achievement tests. Puerto Rican pupils, however, obtained the lowest achievement scores. Although non-English speaking pupils were not tested, it can be presumed that those Puerto Rican children who were tested still had varying degrees of difficulty with the English language. For these children school is probably perceived as the most cogent force for acculturation available to them.

This discussion leads up to the hypothesis that, for many Negro children, the school may not be considered an ally, but rather, an institution which one must defend against.

The interaction between self-esteem and trials, although significant, was in the reverse direction from that predicted. These results can be at least partially accounted for by the fact that high self-esteem pupils have a significantly greater incidence of over-estimation than low self-esteem pupils. It would appear that low self-esteem pupils err in the direction of underestimating their ability. It must also be concluded that achievement expectation, as an aspect of level of aspiration, is less related to the reality function of self-esteem than was presupposed in this study. High self-esteem permits pupils to have high aspirations, irrespective of their actual abilities. However, scholastic ability does play the role of permitting individuals to achieve their academic aspirations. Success tends to perpetuate itself. White pupils, because of their generally high success in school tasks, as compared to Negro pupils, appear to have a different pattern of academic aspirations. This is borne out by the analysis of expectations over the three test trials (Figure 3). Negro pupils' expectations follow a linear downward trend over the three test trials, whereas the expectations of white pupils rise after the first test trial and then drop somewhat after the second trial.

The analysis of the expectation scores (Table 3) alone by groups indicated that there were no overall differences in expectations between Negro and white pupils or between high and low self-esteem pupils. This lack of difference is

accounted for by the interaction (Figure 3) of ethnic groups, self-esteem and test trials. On the first trial Negro pupils expectations were higher than those of white pupils, but on the second and third trials the expectations of the two groups is reversed. Although Negro pupils did reduce their expectations downwards in the direction of their actual achievement, their over-estimations consistently exceeded those of white pupils.

The results of this study do cast some light on the academic expectations of Negro and white pupils. The results also indicate that the generally held assumption that Negro pupils have low self-esteem may not be a valid one. Negroes, like other people, have the need to maintain satisfactory levels of self-esteem. Social and cultural conditions which militate against the fulfillment of this need probably do take their toll, but not necessarily directly.

Rejection of school may be one of the ways that Negro pupils maintain self-esteem in spite of low achievement. It also appears that, initially, Negro pupils have at least comparable levels of aspirations of white pupils. What the Negro pupils in this study lacked were the skills necessary to approach in performance their aspiration levels.

#### SCHOOL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY\*

1. Results of the study indicate there are no differences between Negro and white pupils in self-esteem. This lack of difference may be the result of reaction formations and/or other defense mechanisms.

Programs for disadvantaged Negro youth which emphasize esteem may have value, but probably will not accomplish very much. Positive images of Negroes should be an objective of programs for white children. Integrated texts, photographic material of minority groups, and human relations programs should be aimed at the white population, as well as towards minority groups.

2. Results of the study indicate that Negro pupils do have more negative attitudes towards school than white pupils. This may be one of the defense mechanisms (Item 1) which Negro pupils employ in maintaining their self-esteem.

\*This section was prepared with the assistance of Jack Moultrie

Programs for disadvantaged Negro youth should apprise teachers of the source of the negative attitudes towards school on the part of pupils. Human relations courses for teachers should have a content that is based on research rather than simply on "good will."

3. Results indicate that although Negro pupils appeared to have as high aspirations as white pupils when first approaching an academic task, repeated experience with the task, when resulting in failure, produces significantly lower subsequent levels of aspiration.

Programs and curricula for disadvantaged Negro youth should concentrate on providing successful academic experiences. Materials should be used which provide gradual increments in learning difficulty. Programed instructional materials, which are based on this principal, should be used significantly more than they are at present.

4. Results indicate a significantly greater gap between aspirations and achievement for Negro children than white children. Probably, many of the problems of pupil discipline that teachers must cope with are derived from pupils' frustrations in their achievement strivings.

Programs in guidance should be initiated which point out to pupils the relationship between means and goals. Guidance counselors in the elementary schools should be responsible for this clarification to pupils.

5. Many commonly held assumptions held by school personnel do not have a basis in fact. A periodic newsletter or information sheet containing pertinent research findings should be circulated in the schools.

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## APPENDIX A

Summary of Analysis of Variance for  
 Negro and White Pupils on Self-concept (Matching)

| Source                          | df | MS      | F        |
|---------------------------------|----|---------|----------|
| Between self-concept Levels (A) | 1  | 2875.14 | 154.49** |
| Between Ethnic groups (B)       | 1  | .36     | .02      |
| A x B                           | 1  | 4.99    | .27      |
| Within                          | 52 | 18.61   |          |

\*\* p < .01

## APPENDIX B

|           |  |  |  |  |  |  |            |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|------------|
| pleasant  |  |  |  |  |  |  | unpleasant |
| good      |  |  |  |  |  |  | bad        |
| dirty     |  |  |  |  |  |  | clean      |
| kind      |  |  |  |  |  |  | cruel      |
| honest    |  |  |  |  |  |  | dishonest  |
| nice      |  |  |  |  |  |  | awful      |
| happy     |  |  |  |  |  |  | sad        |
| beautiful |  |  |  |  |  |  | ugly       |
| poor      |  |  |  |  |  |  | rich       |
| fair      |  |  |  |  |  |  | unfair     |

## Achievement Test

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

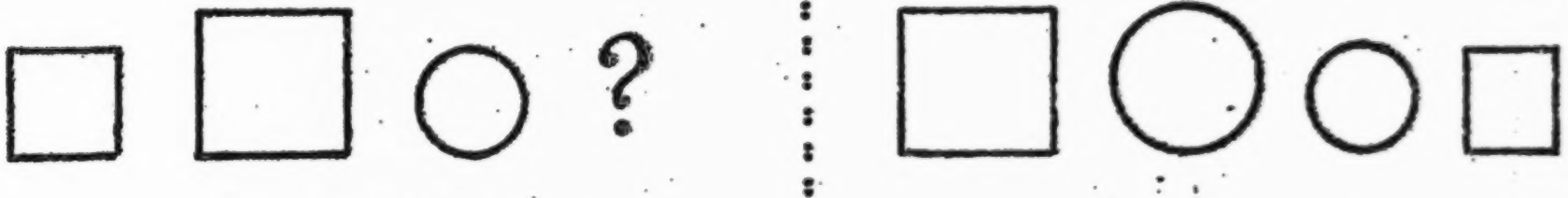
## Problems Test

This is a test of problem solving. There are twenty questions in the test. All of the problems are different so make sure you look at each problem carefully.

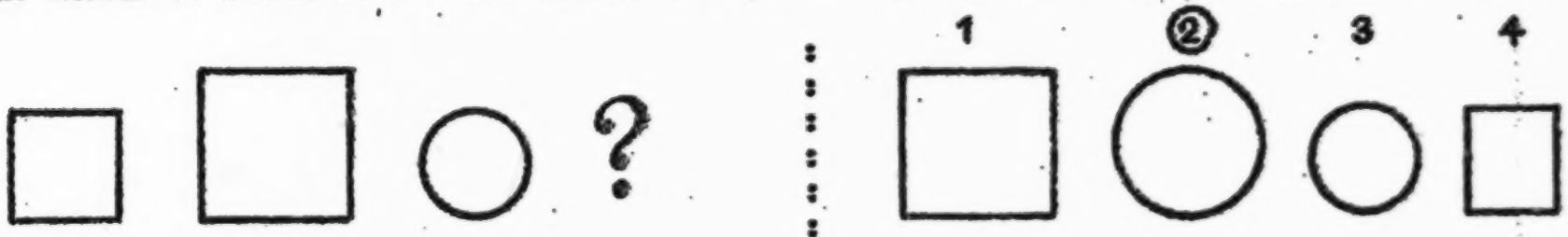
Many of the problems are arranged so that the problem is on the left side of a dotted line. On the right side of the dotted line are four possible answers to the problem. Only one of the four possible answers is correct. You are to put a circle around the number which is over the shape you think is correct.

- Example -

Which shape belongs in the last place?



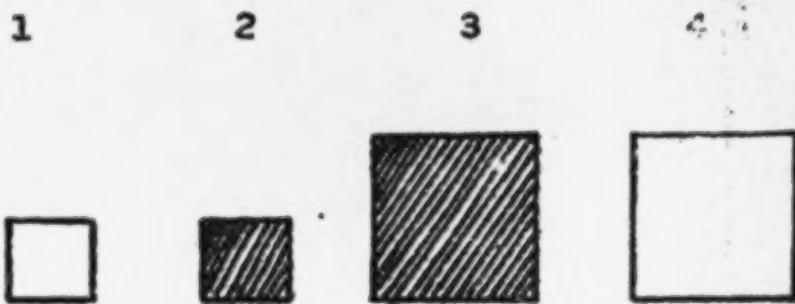
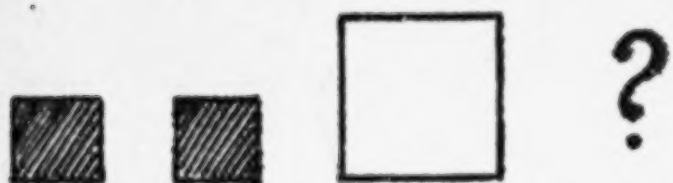
The answer of course is 2. You should have put a circle around the 2 as was done below:



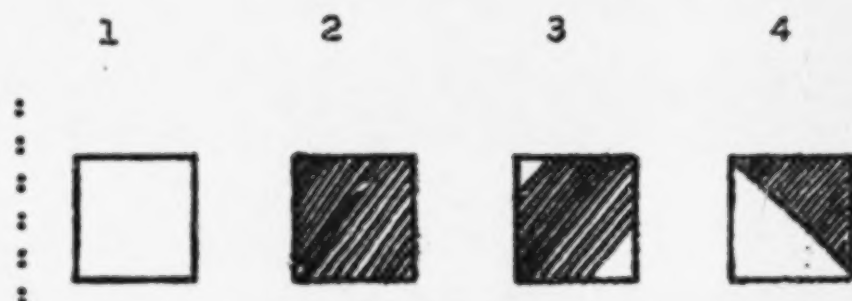
The problems on the test are arranged like this on, although of course, the problems themselves are different.

Remember, you should put a circle around the number which is over the shape you think is correct.

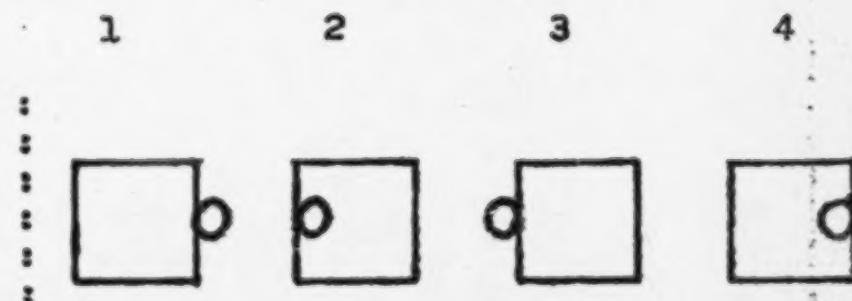
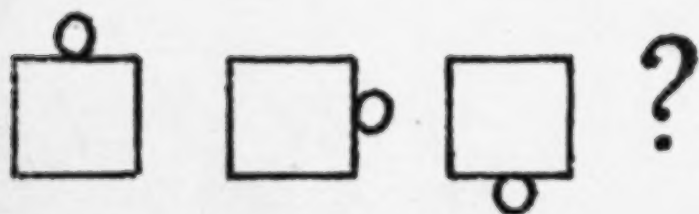
1) Which shape belongs in the last place?



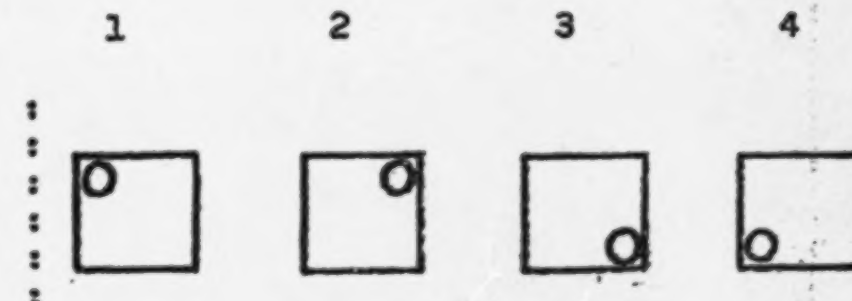
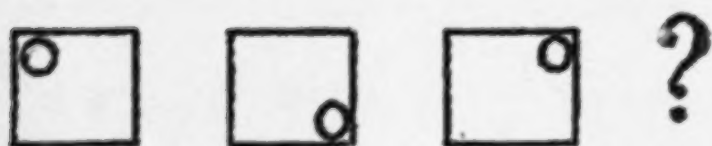
2) Which shape belongs in the last place?



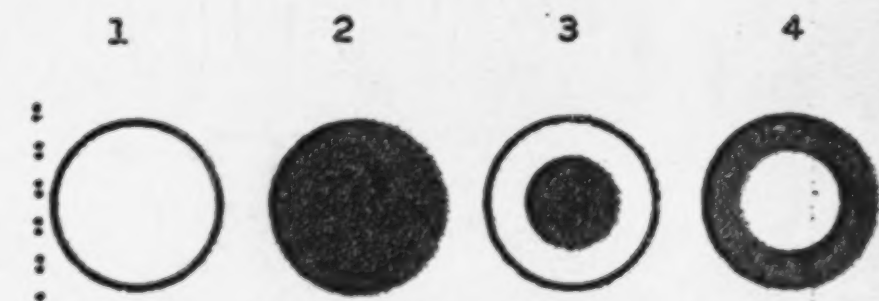
3) Which shape belongs in the last place?



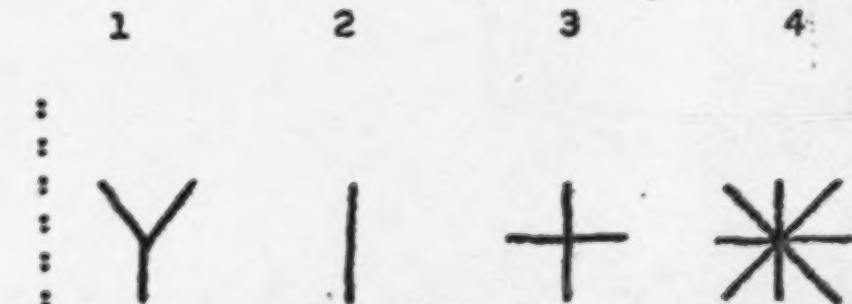
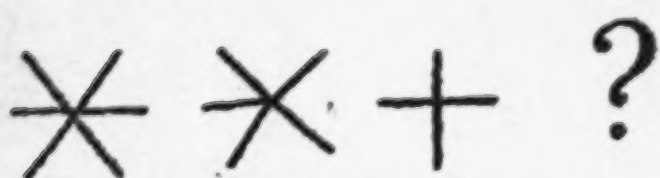
4) Which shape belongs in the last place?



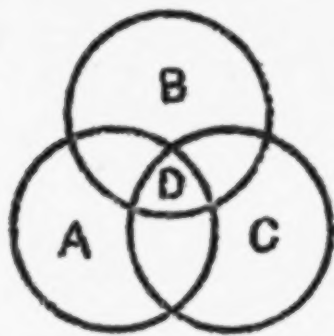
5) Which shape belongs in the last place?



6) Which shape belongs in the last place?



7) Which letter is in all three circles?



?

1

2

3

4

A

B

C

D

8) Which shape belongs in the last place?



1

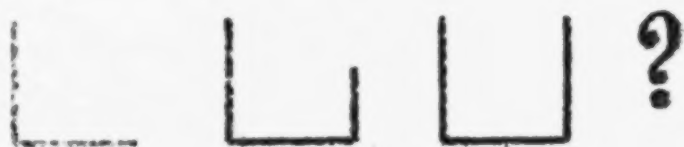
2

3

4



9) Which shape belongs in the last place?

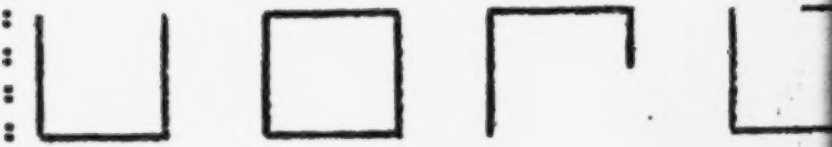


1

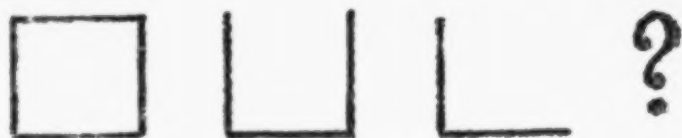
2

3

4



10) Which shape belongs in the last place?



1

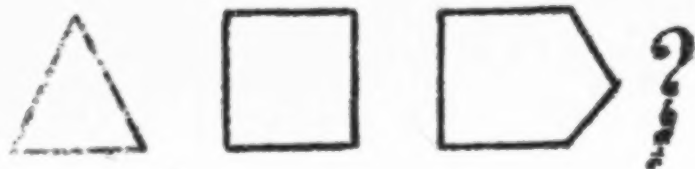
2

3

4



11) Which shape belongs in the last place?



1

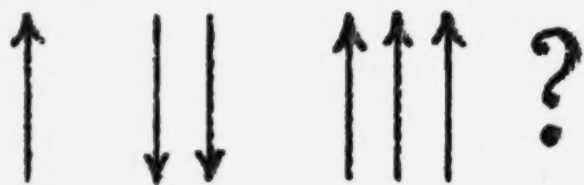
2

3

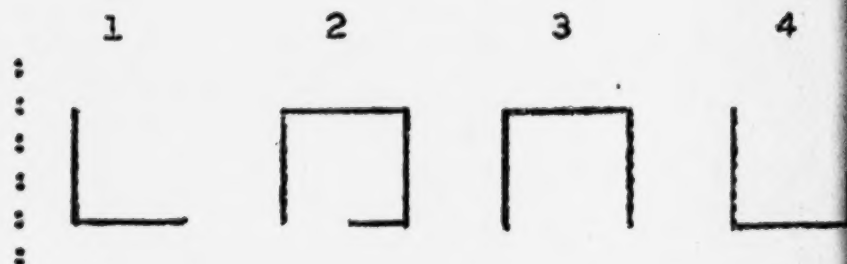
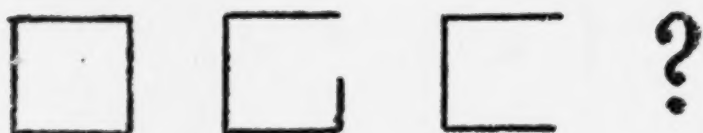
4



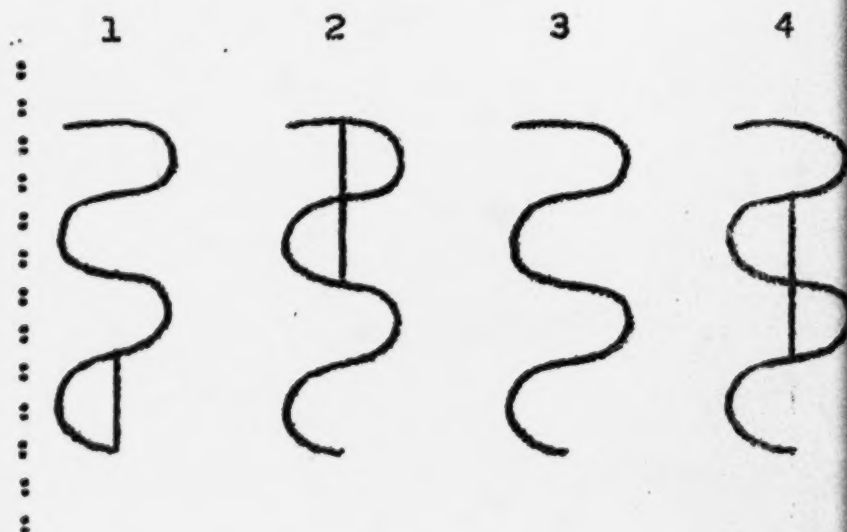
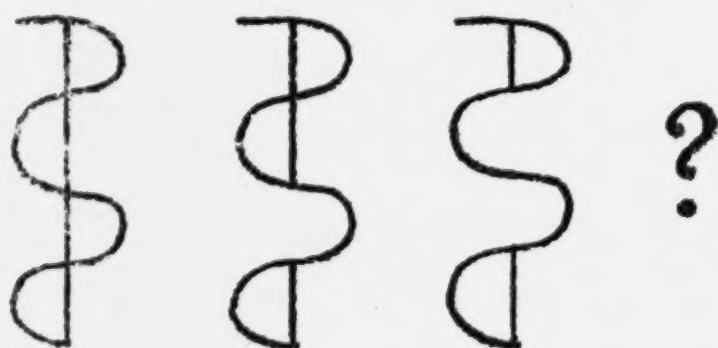
12) Which group of arrows belongs in the last place?



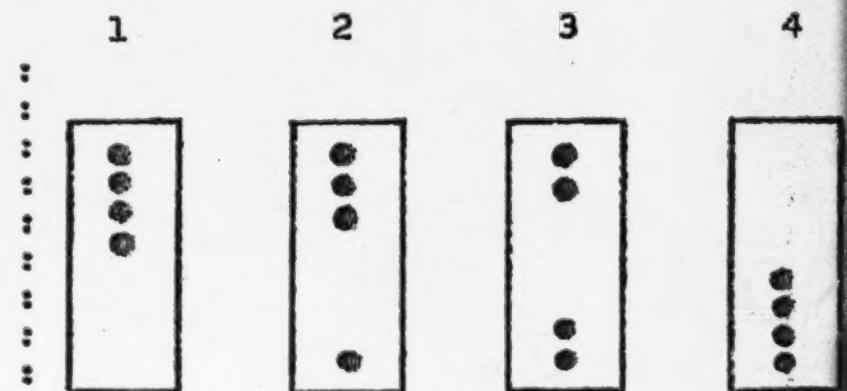
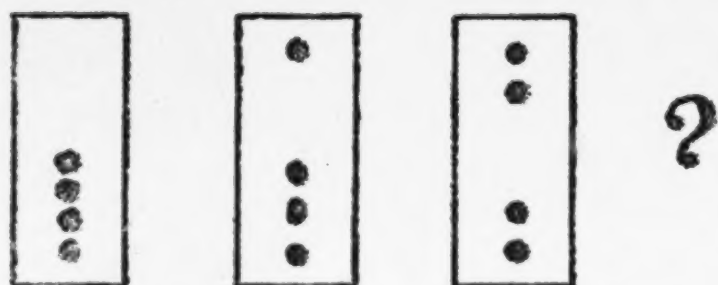
13) Which shape belongs in the last place?



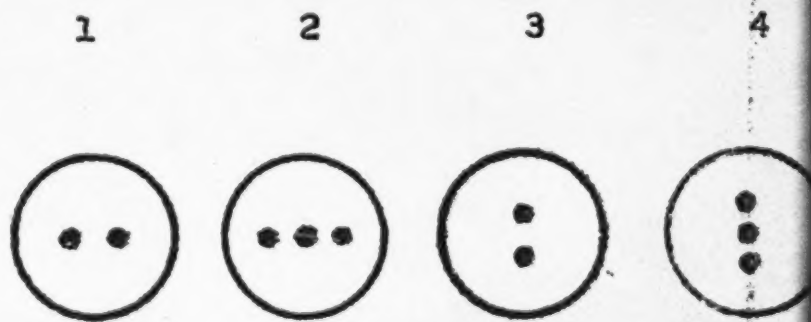
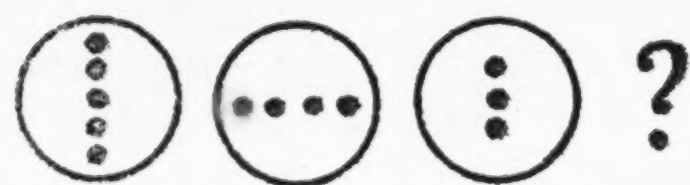
14) Which shape belongs in the last place?



15) Which shape belongs in the last place?



16) Which shape belongs in the last place?



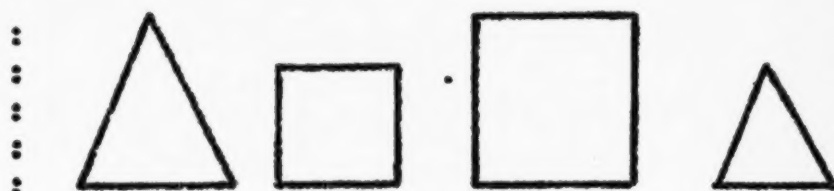
17) Which shape belongs in the last place?

1

2

3

4



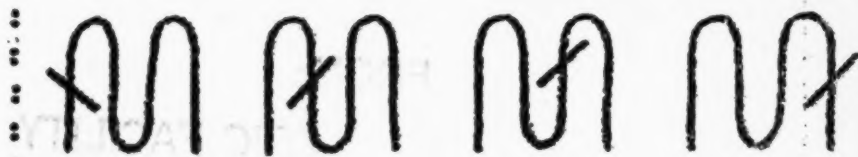
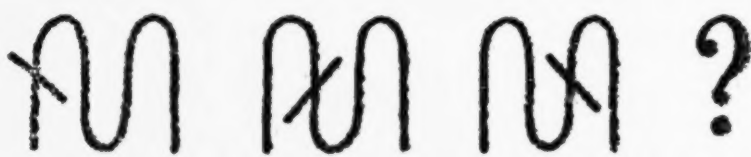
18) Which shape belongs in the last place?

1

2

3

4



19) Which shape belongs in the last place?

1

2

3

4



20) Which shape belongs in the last place?

1

2

3

4

